

# The Commoner.

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## The Republican Party's Own Answer

In his address to the republican national convention, Temporary Chairman Burrows referred to the republican victory in 1904, and then asked: "In view of this indorsement, it becomes pertinent and opportune to inquire, what has the republican party done in the last four years of government control to forfeit public confidence or create distrust in its capacity for future administration?"

For this question the Rochester (New York) Union and Advertiser finds a striking answer. This is the answer which the Union and Advertiser takes out of the mouth of Senator Burrows' own party: "In the broad effect of its policy it has precipitated panic, blighted industry and trade with prolonged depression, closed factories, reduced work and wages, halted enterprise and crippled American production. Every consideration of public safety and individual interest demands that the government shall be rescued from the hands of those who have shown themselves incapable of conducting it without disaster." [From the republican platform of 1896.]

## A POLITICAL PARTY AFRAID

If the mental attitude of the republican party can be judged by the action of the convention, it has taken counsel of its fears.

In rejecting, by vote of 917 to 63—nearly 15 to 1—the plank providing for the physical valuation of railroads, the republican party admits that it is afraid of the truth. What objection can there be to finding out what the railroads are actually worth? If they are over-capitalized, the country ought to know it; if they are not over-capitalized, the railroads themselves ought to be glad to have the fact announced. So long as the truth is concealed, there will be exaggeration on both sides—those who lean to the side of the railroads denying that there is over-capitalization, and those who demand rate reduction insisting that the over-capitalization is considerable. We ought to know the truth. But the republican party shows by the action which the convention took that it is

### AFRAID OF THE TRUTH.

The timidity of the republican leaders was even more emphasized in the vote of 880 to 94—9 to 1—rejecting the plank providing for publicity as to campaign contributions and expenditures. They are even afraid of the light, for publicity would throw light upon politics. Elections are public affairs and they ought to be conducted in a public way. Secrecy as to campaign methods and as to the influences which affect elections is indefensible. If the demand was for the publication of past contributions and expenditures, the republican convention might have offered as an excuse that contributions made and money expended without expectation of publicity could not be made public without some embarrassment to those giving and receiving, but such an excuse can not be offered for a law applying to future contributions and disbursements. It is not necessary that small contributions shall be made public, and to make these public might subject the giver to injustice if, for instance, the giver was an employe and opposed to his employer. The same argument that is made in favor of the secret ballot could be made in favor of secrecy as to small contributions, but this argument will not apply to large contributions. If a man gives largely, the public has a right to know whether the gift measures a general interest in the public, or is part of an implied contract whereby a return is to be secured in legislation or in immunity. No corporation of any kind should be allowed to contribute to a campaign fund, for corporations are not organized for political purposes, and individual contributions above a reasonable minimum should be open to inspection in order that the voters may be made ac-

quainted with the influences which are at work in the campaign. Why did the republican convention turn down this plank by such an overwhelming vote when the president had asked for publicity legislation and the republican candidate for president had put himself on record in favor of such legislation? And how fortunate it is that Mr. Taft's letter to Senator Burrows was brought to the attention of the public! If it had not appeared before the convention, it would have been difficult to find after the convention. There can be but one explanation of the action of the republican convention, namely, that it is the intention of those in charge of the republican party to secure campaign funds from sources which they dare not disclose. They are

### AFRAID OF THE LIGHT.

But a still more remarkable manifestation of fear is to be found in the vote of 866 to 114—7 to 1—by which they turned down the proposition to elect United States senators by direct vote of the people. What does this mean? Simply that the republican leaders distrust popular government. We elect our congressmen by the people; we elect our governors and state officers by the people; we elect our president and vice president by the people. If the electors have no discretion—and no elector would dare to vote contrary to the sentiment of those who elected him—why are the people denied the right to select senators by direct vote? There is one reason, and only one—the United States senate today is the bulwark of predatory wealth; favor-seeking corporations have made it a depository of their power and they close the door to reform. Every remedial law must have the sanction of the senate as well as the approval of the house and the president. So long as the exploiting interests can control the senate, they can hold the people at bay, and this is why the republican convention insolently thwarted the purpose of those republicans who sympathize with the desire of the people in their demand for relief from present conditions. Surely the rank and file of the republican party will express their indignation at this open and obvious distrust of the people. The republican party has added to its many sins this unpardonable one, that it is

### AFRAID OF THE PEOPLE.

What an indictment the voters can bring against the republican party this year!

**AFRAID OF THE TRUTH!**

**AFRAID OF THE LIGHT!**

**AFRAID OF THE PEOPLE!**

And the party, in convention assembled, pleads guilty to the indictment!